

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

February 19, 2002 LB 185

many of you have been led to believe that this is a very complicated bill. There are all kinds of issues. There are constitutional issues. There are issues of...of the determination about different kinds of trains and things of that nature. These have absolutely nothing to do with this particular bill. This is simply a bill to continue to require a two-person crew on all the freight trains that are traveling through Nebraska and it's nothing more, nothing less. Now, we have adopted the amendment that was proposed to exclude the...what I would call the little trains that aren't really a problem, but we, in Nebraska, have the right and I think the duty to determine what is a safe circumstance for our citizens. I'm simply attempting to safeguard the citizens of Nebraska by making it impossible for the Union Pacific and the Burlington Northern to allow a one-person crew until it's approved by the feds. Now that's all that this amounts to. The federal jurisdiction covers many things, but it does not cover this issue. In the federal court case they have said that's up to the states to make a determination if they feel that they have a safety concern. Now why would we have a safety concern in Nebraska? Why would...somebody has said that we're an island. Okay, why are we an island? Why do we have big concerns in Nebraska? We have the busiest rail line in the world going through the central part of the state of Nebraska. Is it unusual that we would be concerned about the safety of our citizens? I think it's vital that we are concerned about them. And let me remind you that the federal government has not yet ruled on this issue and that's all there is to it. Once they take action and how...why do they take action? How do they take action? They take action when it is demonstrated to them that it's safe to operate with less than two people. That's all there is to it. But we are led to believe that we, in our wisdom, here in the state of Nebraska, can make that determination. Let's leave it up to the...to the management and the unions to make a decision about crew size. This is not crew size issue. This is an issue involving safety and I happen to live in an area where there are a great number of employees, primarily in my area, of the Union Pacific Railroad, and they are very vitally concerned. You take the whopper trains now, the 240-car trains. It takes six locomotives to operate that and are you comfortable with the consideration that possibly one